

# PROFESSIONAL DEONTOLOGY IN TEACHER TRAINING. REPORT ON A TRAINING EXPERIENCE

## DEONTOLOGÍA PROFESIONAL EN LA FORMACIÓN DE PROFESORADO. INFORME DE UNA EXPERIENCIA DE FORMACIÓN

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### *ABSTRACT*

This article presents the report of a pedagogical experience of Pre-Service Teacher Training on the subject of *Professional Deontology*, a curricular unit which is part of the degrees on Primary and Pre-School Education taught at *Escola Superior de Educação do Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra* (Portugal). The foundation of the curricular unit and its characteristics are presented, as well as the analysis of the students' evaluation on its teaching effects as perceived by them. The analysis of the data, based on some contents of a portfolio, shows a considerable positive perception of those effects.

*Key words:* ethics; personal and social development; Professional Deontology; teacher development; teacher training

### *RESUMEN*

Este artículo presenta un informe relativo a una experiencia pedagógica realizada en la asignatura de *Deontología Profesional*, de las carreras de Maestros y Educadores de Infancia de la *Escola Superior de Educação del Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra* (Portugal). En este artículo se presentan los fundamentos de la asignatura, sus características y los resultados del análisis de la evaluación de los efectos de la enseñanza según la percepción de los estudiantes participantes. El análisis de los datos, obtenidos por medio de algunos elementos de un portafolio, muestra un considerable efecto positivo de esos efectos.

*Palabras clave:* Deontología Profesional; desarrollo personal y social; desarrollo del profesor; ética; formación de profesores

## 1. PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF PROFESSIONAL DEONTOLOGY

In this article we present a pedagogical experience on the personal, social and professional development of Pre-Service teacher students provided in the curricular unit of *Professional Deontology*. This curricular unit took place in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the training courses at *Escola Superior de Educação de Coimbra* (ESEC), prior to the development of the European Higher Education Area and is now placed at master level. The article presents the result of the first training experience on the subject, specifying the structure of that curricular unit and the evaluation performed by the students regarding their perceptions on teaching effects, once the teaching period ceased. The main idea supporting our educational work is the acceptance, as a starting point, that Education implies an axiological orientation which structures the whole practice. Education is not neutral and the intention to present it as such carries an ideology pursuing specific objectives to be reached by their dissimulation (Freire, 1974, 2003; Santos, 2008). Educational agents – teachers, in particular, regardless of the level they teach – are very especial value conveyers and their personal ethical development ought to be considered as a major central concern of Teacher Training Programmes. As such, those agents have a particularly relevant impact on the development of their students and of the community where they are included, while carrying out their life development, in which the professional training and career play a very significant role. The teaching profession poses particularly relevant ethical and deontological demands in the personal and professional development of its agents. Therefore, the personality of the teacher should be the direct object of the training practice to a considerable extent, both in Pre-Service and in In-Service Training. Authors like Gusdorf (1970), Reboul (1982), Lago Bornstein (1989), Torres (2000), Veiga (2005), Severino & Fazenda (2002), Baptista (2005), Alarcão (2003), Seiça (2003), Santos (2008), Estrela, Marques, Alves & Feio (2008), as well as Caetano & Silva (2009) insist on the irreplaceable role played by the teachers' personality in the pedagogical relationship and in the process of educating and conveying values.

The Philosophy of Education subjacent in the Portuguese Educational Act sees Education as a remarkably significant phenomenon in terms of personal development objectives<sup>1</sup> (Caetano & Silva, 2009). Educating is much more than developing skills, acquiring abilities or competences, socialising and – surely – much more than teaching

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<sup>1</sup> Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo (2005/ 1997/ 1986). In this document, we are able to see a major concern about the personal and social development of the Students. A simple quantitative analysis shows us that 50% of the general objectives of the Portuguese Educational System are correlated to that issue, while the specific objectives for Basic School include 36% of references and 21% in Secondary School (Comissão de Reforma do Sistema Educativo, 1988: 119). The Teacher's personal and social education is also aimed at art. 30<sup>th</sup>, N<sup>o</sup> 1, a). The remainder of the legislation embodies this perspective.

or merely conveying information (Reboul, 1982). Although it implies all those aspects, Education still is – and above all – a global and integrated project for developing the personality of the students, as well as a project of development of the surrounding communities (Freire, 1974).

With this in mind, the Programme proposed for the curricular unit of *Professional Deontology*, included then in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the Pre-Service Teacher Training Courses (Pre-School and Basic Education) as an optional curricular unit, is organised under the following assumptions<sup>2</sup>.

Education is seen as an intrinsically social phenomenon, based on a relational structure in which individuals, groups and communities develop actions of reciprocal influence. This social structure acts on a two-level dimension, one at an ontological (Heidegger, 1986) or on a metaphysical level (Levinas, 1965; 1974), and the other on a phenomenal or ontic level (Heidegger, 1986). Societies lie on the ontological structure that constitutes the human being (Theunissen, 1984) and where an intersubjective causality works (Nédoncelle, 1963; 1974; 1977). These educational actions are followed by their consequences that determine the specificity and the complexity of both its agents and communities. That is why Education is considered not only important for the students' development (and correlatively also important for the teachers' development), but also for the development of the community.

Education may also be defined as a self-generating reality since its actions are characterised by an interactive dimension and therefore they contribute decisively for its configuration as a social global phenomenon. As such, seen as a self-regulated system, Education produces reintegrating and self-modifying results, thus creating dynamics that give it a permanently open and renewed character and consequently, it may be envisaged as a fundamental way of promoting policies of change, innovation and also personal, economic, social and cultural development, but not in a technocratic manner (Freire, 1974; 2003).

With the development of new social configurations, dynamics and values, the promotion of reforms and revisions of the Educational Systems takes place in a permanent and continuous process. These changes generally have two goals: to set up-to-date educational propositions of institutions where new necessities emerge, and to generate new values and dynamics within the Educational System that can be introduced into Society. Thus, social and individual change happens when the definition of new realms of possibilities, the desire of individuals to reach them and their social praxis converge.

A strong professional conscience and its correlative deontology should be assumed as an essential teacher training dimension. In this perspective, teachers should be seen as particularly relevant agents of social transformation through the pedagogical relationship they develop (Downie, 1999; Caetano & Silva, 2008).

Assuming this, a curricular unit of *Professional Deontology* (Reis & Ramos, 2004b) was included in the curriculum of Pre-Service Teacher Training Courses (Pre-School

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<sup>2</sup> An irregular and unacceptable administrative situation concerning the Programme of this curricular unit which is being now applied to master level makes impossible for anyone to access it, so in this text that version is not referred or taken into account.

and Primary Education) which are part of our educational offer in order to provide and achieve relevant quality training for our students, as far as their personal and professional development is concerned. In view of this, the application of teaching and learning methodologies is also relevant to promote not only an integration of the theoretical contents of Sciences of Education, but also for a mutual integration of the theoretical preparation and the pedagogical practice, both of them continuously linked to a process of reflection on the professional pathway of the students.

Entering the teaching profession poses its future intervenient particularly relevant ethical and deontological demands concerning their personal and professional development (Caetano & Silva, 2008). As such, reflecting on the training of teachers is required. Its object should be the conscience of the professional identity, as well as its transposition into a deontological code (explained in the official regulations of the teaching profession, with no corporate deontological code in Portugal<sup>3</sup>) and to a personal, professional and citizen ethics (which is frequently non-thematised) (Braga, 2001; Cunha, 1996; Estrela, 1991; Monteiro, 2004; 2005; 2008; Reis, 2001; Santos, 2008).

To give the future teachers categories and means of action on the ethics field is a transversal demand of our Pre-Service Teacher Training Courses. This is also focused by the articulation of *Professional Deontology* with the curricular unit of *Personal and Social Development* (Reis & Ramos, 2004a), which was taught in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of both of these courses. It was also articulated with other curricular units, such as *Multicultural and Citizenship Education* (3<sup>rd</sup> year of the courses). Therefore, these courses presented a strong educational offer in what concerns the personal and social development of their students<sup>4</sup>, unlike the usual panorama (Lago Bornstein, 1989; Ramos, 2008; Santos, 2008; Estrela; Marques; Alves & Feio, 2008; Caetano & Silva, 2009).

The pursuing of such objectives has played an important role in our educational offer for many years. It has proved to be pertinent if we consider the increasingly significant attention that these objectives deserve from other institutions and other courses in other kind of courses (v. g., Harvard University – Faculty of Arts and Sciences, 2004; Buckeridge & Grünwald, 2003). In the latest study on strategic guidelines for the development of ESEC, we have met the demands of our prospective students for ethical training (ESEC, 2005).

The positive effects of the use of the Non-Formal Education approach have been demonstrated in some of our previous research and studies (Gonçalves; Vaz & Ramos,

<sup>3</sup> There is no Deontological Code for teachers in Portugal. The Deontology of the teaching profession follows the provisions of its official regulation (ECD – Estatuto da Carreira Docente, 2010: Art.º 10.º, 10.º-A, 10.º-B, 10.º-C) for the public sector and according to the prevailing regulations for each institution in the private sector. This lends the teaching profession traces of heteronomy that have been rightfully lamentable for a long time (Estrela, 1993). The latest revisions of the official regulation of the teaching profession have deeply accentuated this feature, and are accompanied by the implementation of technocratic and heteronomous management systems, both in the public and private sectors of the Portuguese education (Lima, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> The reform performed within the context of the European Higher Education Area did not change the importance given to these curricular components, as well as their number, although there are some slight differences in their official designation.

2003; Ramos; Vaz & Gonçalves, 2004; Vaz; Gonçalves & Ramos, 2004; Ramos, 2010). In fact, the results of the trainees' evaluation of the training in this area enabled us to conclude that it is pertinent and necessary. One of these pedagogical experiences is demonstrated herein.

## 2. PROGRAMME OF PROFESSIONAL DEONTOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE COURSE

During one semester, with 45 hours (15 sessions/3 hours each) of classroom-based training and an estimation of an extra 45 hours of individual work, the curricular unit of *Professional Deontology* is aimed at achieving the following objectives.

The first one is to allow the students the opportunity to reflect on their personal experience as students, both in Primary<sup>5</sup> and Secondary School<sup>6</sup>, and in Higher Education. Thus, the curricular unit is supposed to encourage a process of personal and professional growth. In order to achieve this, the ideal circumstances would be to turn the curricular unit into an academic year module, but the present legal definition does not – and will not – allow it.

The students are also supposed to evaluate their training as Pre-Service teacher trainees. Having this curricular unit on the last year of their training gives the students an opportunity of looking back into their previous learning experience and to reflect on their expectations and projects, doubts and certainties, abilities and motivations, hopes and fears. By creating these circumstances, students are also given space and time for sharing experiences. This way, the frequent personal and professional problems that are often raised in the beginning of their careers (Cavaco, 1993; Simões; Santos; Gonçalves & Simões, 1997; Braga, 2001; Serrazina & Oliveira, 2001) may be avoided or at least minimized. The fact that our training courses set the students in professional contexts from the moment they enroll is particularly important to this action: by doing this, they become more conscious of their profession and its conditions, which *per se* is a positive point (Dewhurst, 1999).

Another objective is to recognise the importance given to personal and social development by the Portuguese Educational Act, both in what concerns teachers and students, as we have previously referred. It is also important to explain this and to become aware of their projects as a person, a citizen and a professional. Finally, the development of competences of interpersonal relationship in different contexts is also an objective to be reached.

The Programme has a strong focus on the core values of the concepts of *Citizenship*, *Democracy*, *Duties*, *Rights* and *Human Rights*, all seen as an ethical founding platform for contemporary educational praxis.

<sup>5</sup> Educational level which includes, in Portugal, three cycles of 4, 2 and 3 years.

<sup>6</sup> This level goes from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, in Portugal.

The Programme includes the following items and subjects:

a) Basic notions of *Deontology*, *Ethics*, *Moral*, *Profession*, *Deontological Code*; the specificity of a Deontology of the teaching profession; school as a significant space for the construction of an ethical and social project;

b) Main documents that regulate teachers' duties and rights of in the Portuguese Educational System or that allow their definition and clarification;

c) Being a teacher and the nature and meaning of Education and educating – for a critical and reflective praxis; teaching profession and citizenship – duties and rights of the teacher/educator-citizen; professional ethics and/or an ethical profession.

In a meaningful learning perspective, the didactic methodology presupposes linking with the previous training in other curricular units of the Course, and in their pedagogical practice. Therefore, the classes are run both by the lecturer and the students, with the use of explanation and dialogue (vertical and horizontal), simulation of group dynamic situations, work group/cooperative and meaningful learning, development of projects, production of research papers and a reflective Portfolio (Sá-Chaves, 2005) of their personal and professional development.

The use of this didactic methodology is based on a training strategy that *combines* both *intellectual* and *practical* strategies (Estrela, 1991). The students deal with theoretical notions of ethics, human rights and philosophy of education, and apply them reflectively in the production of texts, always guided by a deontological focus. Discussions and reflections are also encouraged by philosophical texts where the essence of being a teacher is the major theme. This strategy intends to provide the students with a critical view of educational and pedagogical issues.

No less important, the inexistence of a specific professional college, and the lack of a deontological code in the Portuguese Educational and Labour System, encouraged us to choose an approach as critical as possible to the legal regulating texts. Thus, we aim at developing the students' autonomous thinking as much as possible, enabling them to transfer and apply the relevant contents to new situations. More than acquiring a "narrative" knowledge of those legal documents, the students are expected to produce a critical well-based reasoning that may guide their practical choices and courses of action, and even create new solutions and ways of solving practical deontological problems (thus avoiding the situation described by Santos, 2008).

Besides participating in the classes, the students are expected to produce two different pedagogical works.

One produced either in work groups or individually, is to be presented in a working session that will create a group dynamic. Issues are dealt with in order to produce the most convenient activity that will enable their peers to attain the Programme's objectives.

Each work produced and presented by the students is driven by their own interest in the subject, which means they choose to investigate and work on a subject of their choice that might have had a reflection on their own issues. As such, they have to explain their own questions, regarding themselves and their profession, and bring them to the classroom. The presentation strategies and activities are also chosen by them; they

must be dynamic, learner-centered and using meaningful and cooperative learning. The non-formal education approach and its methodologies of promoting values and personal development are given a relevant place in this curricular unit.

The other pedagogical task, which must be completed individually, consists of a reflective Portfolio, in which their experience with the students and teacher training, seen from the deontological perspective, is the major concern. Its structure is as follows:

- a) Chapter 1: Characterisation of my whole professional and academic training;
- b) Chapter 2: Expectations toward my training – What has been achieved or not, difficulties found, etc;
- c) Chapter 3: My personal and social development in Higher Education – values I've brought, achieved;
- d) Chapter 4: My experience as a primary and secondary student – experiences, values, etc;
- e) Chapter 5: My projects as a person, a citizen and a professional;
- f) Chapter 6: Essays produced in the curricular unit of *Professional Deontology*;
- g) Chapter 7: My path in *Professional Deontology*;

As said previously, the elaboration of the Portfolio aimed at evaluating the students' performance in the curricular unit. It was produced all along the semester under the supervision of the lecturer. This supervision took place both during the classes, in which some time was dedicated to answer whatever questions the students presented, and during the tutoring time (here, individually). Since the beginning of the semester, the students were told of the accessory aim of the Portfolio, that of helping evaluating the curricular unit and improving its course in time.

A main and essential aspect of the students discourse in the Portfolio that was strongly stimulated has to do with the fact that the produced texts had to present a considerable grade of development and reflection. Therefore, no simple texts or answers were intended. On the contrary, complex and reflective texts were produced, allowing a considerable range of personal thought and the consequent demanding interpretation performed by the investigator.

The curricular unit began in the first semester of the school year of 2005-2006 and is still being taught in the bachelor's degree and master levels. In the first year, 23 students (22 female and 1 male) enrolled in the unit that latter completed with proficiency. The material produced with these students is analysed in this article.

### **3. EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING EFFECTS PERCEIVED BY THE STUDENTS**

#### **3.1 Analysis Process**

In order to evaluate the results of the course through the students' acknowledged personal and professional changes, we collected the discourse material from the 7<sup>th</sup>



chapter of the Portfolio – “My path in *Professional Deontology*” –, which illustrates the discourse *corpus* that was submitted to a qualitative contents analysis (Navarro & Díaz, 1999; Callejo, 2001; Vala, 2003; Glaser, 1992). Nevertheless, some pertinent log units for this purpose were collected from other parts of the Portfolio, since they have a direct correlation with that chapter. The collected discourse data were processed, as said previously, under a qualitative perspective because this is more suitable for our discourse *corpus* given its spontaneity, subtlety and complexity (Callejo, 2001; Van der Maren, 1996; Glaser, 1992). These characteristics of an essentially unnormalisable discourse led us also to avoid the use of the usual and common software available for the analysis’ process; as it may be seen in Lorenzo Quiles (2011), as powerful as this kind of instruments may be, they are mainly applicable with efficacy to very simple, straight and normalisable texts. Once performed the contents analysis and detected the respective log units, they were integrated into a discourse data reduction matrix (Vala, 2003; Van der Maren, 1996).

The evaluation objectives and the respective categories of analysis were defined *a priori* (Vala, 2003) and then applied to the *corpus*. The categories, as well as the subcategories, respect the demands of reliability, exhaustiveness and exclusiveness in order to be internally valid (Vala, 2003; Navarro & Díaz, 1999; Van der Maren, 1996).

### 3.2 Objectives of the Contents Analysis

The objectives of analysis were the following:

- a) To detach the students’ perception and acknowledgement of their personal change.
- b) To detach the meaning revelation (personally and professionally) perceived and acknowledged by the students.

### 3.3 Categories and subcategories of the Contents Analysis

The aforementioned objectives are correlated with two following categories of analysis:

a) Category 1: ***Personal change***. This category includes discourse data on the perception or acknowledgement of some change on the students’ person due to the work carried out during the semester on *Professional Deontology*. Consequently, the data to be collected refers to a self-knowledge process acquired due to the training received;

b) Category 2: ***Meaning revelation (personal and professional)***. Under this category we gather those discourse elements which can be liable to reveal that the notion of being a teacher– considered simultaneously as the person and the professional – was clarified through *Professional Deontology*. Thus, the data to be collected points out the perception of acquiring something new and structural from the previous profession defi-



dition produced during the Pre-Service Teacher Training, as well as of the relevance of the teacher's personality.

#### 4. RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS

We now present the results of the analysis of the students' evaluation. After each synopsis of the results, some examples of log units that may demonstrate the conclusions are quoted. In the Annexes 2 tables show all the log units obtained in the analysis process.

The following aspects of the analysis can be highlighted.

In a brief overview of the whole material produced within the context of the Portfolios, we can safely state that the training achieved very satisfactory results, according to the self-perception of the trainees. They were faced with a positively surprising experience. Many of them proposed extending the curricular unit to an academic year, instead of a mere semester, thus recognising the importance of time in the process through the training performed. This is an experience we have had for many years in the frame of the curricular unit of *Personal and Social Development*, also taught in our institution, and which runs through the course of an academic year. For the moment, *Professional Deontology* cannot undergo this change, and the curricular modification occurred under the Bologna process does not allow it.

At a closer look, and taking the material gathered the content analysis categories into account, the following conclusions may be drawn.

Given the nature of the curricular unit's Programme geared towards the professional ethical and deontological issues<sup>7</sup>, which is to say the attribution of an ethical and deontological sense to the profession, it could be expected to have more log units under category 2 than category 1.

In fact, that is precisely what happened. Category 1 registers 23 log units, while category 2 shows 39. We think it may be interpreted as an evidence, meaning that the training was perceived as having some effect on a personal level, which was intended by the training, but considerable effects were felt and perceived in the understanding of the meaning of the profession the students are about to take, after a long training period (between 3 and 3 and a half years). However, we must not forget that sometimes a sole reference may be very significant and give much more meaning than in cases where numerous, yet meaningless, occurrences may happen (Callejo, 2001). Therefore, we don't give another meaning to this numerical data, and we now present the qualitative evaluation of the data collected in the reduction matrices of both categories.

Considering the specific log units of each Category, we can point out the following conclusions concerning the two main categories.

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<sup>7</sup> That wouldn't be the case if it was the curricular unit of *Personal and Social Development*.

### **Category 1. Personal change**

The first category's log units show some relevant issues, such as the recognition of the *Professional Deontology* contribution for the aspects presented below.

In general, this category reveals that students acknowledged a personal transformation following the training. That transformation is pointed out through aspects that fit in the self-knowledge frame (process and products, related with specific knowledge and own competences) and a greater individual awareness.

The obtained discourse log units analysis allows finding key-words and expressions that indicate:

a) A students' self-perception of personal transformations on how they act, think, create, overcome unprecedented difficulties, their critical awareness, as well as a self-critical ability and to give sense to their actions. Some examples:

*12 - It was a curricular unit that enriched me a lot on a personal and professional level (...).*

*13 - I consider my path in Professional Deontology a very positive one. I think I evolved as a person and future education professional.*

*14 - I consider these curricular units [Personal and Social Development and Professional Deontology] important for our training, since they make us reflect upon things that we don't even recall most of the time.*

*16 - In this task [the portfolio] I am "forced" to reflect upon myself, what I was, what I am and what I want to be. Although in the beginning it seemed like an easy thing to do, now I'm able to say that it isn't. This was the hardest portfolio I had to make, for I had to reflect a lot and now that I have finished, it seems that I didn't say all there was to say (...).*

*20 - I liked the curricular unit as it contributed significantly to my academic and personal education. I have acquired relevant knowledge on society and on the systems around the school that influence the teaching practice, and on the importance of the required permanent knowledge updating to respond to the demands of society.*

b) That the students perceive their own personal transformations on the knowledge acquired through training; the students describe transformations such as greater awareness, as well as the attitude and knowledge improvement in relation to the themes approached in the curricular unit, and knowledge construction and acquisition on training subjects. Some examples:

*3 - (...) the contribution [of the portfolio] to a deeper knowledge of the Self and to a greater awareness of my role as a future teacher.*

*6 - It contributed to the development of my critical faculties and of my capacity for reflection about questions which I had never seriously considered.*

*7 - It also allowed me to become conscious of the importance of a civic and moral education.*

*9 - Professional Deontology provided me with very important moments of debating ideas, which showed me different ways of thinking and feeling, these moments were, for me, very constructive in making me reviewing my position towards some matters many times.*

*19 - I got to know the importance of concepts such as citizenship, democracy, duties, rights, (human rights).*

c) That the students have recognised the personal change through the acquisition of competences explicitly designated as such. Students mention communication competences, creativity, public speaking and explanation of ideas as well as to defend them with conviction, cooperation attitudes and social competences. Some examples:

*2 – The debates performed during the classes (...) allowed me to acquire more communication skills.*

*4 - I've reached a certain ease when it comes to speaking in public, exposing my ideas with no fear and standing with conviction for my opinions.*

*8 - (...) it helped me to develop my creativity, through a scarcely common practice in higher education, which is to leave to the students' the choice of the investigation's theme, allowing us to express our creativity and concerns.*

*18 - The debates conducted during the classes (...) allowed me to develop my critical faculties.*

*21 - I have adopted a cooperative attitude towards my colleagues.*

*22 - I came (...) to master some competences of personal relationship within different contexts.*

## **Category 2. Meaning Revelation (personal and professional)**

In this second category we highlight the perception of an attribution – new or transformed – of meaning to the teaching profession and the importance of the teacher's person. The log units allow us to observe the profession's structuring that the training helped the students to recognise, altering or converting their way of perceiving reality.

This category presents very extensive contents in terms of the personal and profession meaning recognised by the students. The obtained discourse analysis allows verifying the recognition of the importance of the training for the following aspects:

a) The students' personal and social development and the importance of their ethical education for the teaching profession. Some examples:

*1 – Curricular units such these stir up the personal development of the pupils and induce their full education in its multiple dimensions.*

*12 - Soon I realised that the themes discussed in the class had an added value both for [me as] teacher and for [me as] person.*

*20 - Every issue dealt with in the curricular unit points to the idea that the teaching profession holds an ethical commitment. In this sense, I think that it is extremely important that teachers think about these ethical issues from their pre-service training, and that they study the existing problems at school and at the educational community, and successfully take action in order to be recognised as good professionals.*

*28 - One of the issues that are still forgotten is value education, which, to my understanding, can never be neglected or forgotten by school and by teachers, whether they are working or not. But in reality there are some teachers that fight for it, while others hide themselves under the teaching "shell", forgetting that teaching is a profession of an unquestionable ethical sort: to be a teacher is to educate.*

b) A greater reflection on professional matters. Some examples:

*5 - On the first day of the classes, the professor suggested we thought about what is to be a teacher, which is nothing we hadn't done before, but never in a structured way. In the beginning I thought it would be easy, but it wasn't that simple. I thought until I found the "key" to write a small text (...). The solution was to open my heart and write what I think is being a real teacher. This exercise proved to be very productive for it "compelled" me to structure my ideas about the profession I intend to follow.*

*11 - [The curricular unit was] very productive from the point of view of the personal and social development and professional ethics.*

c) Valuing the training of the learner's personality, as a future professional and citizen. Some examples:

*7 - (...) I consider that my path in Professional Deontology was sufficient for my training, at a professional, personal and social level.*

*16 - I enjoyed the readings on Philosophy of Education (...). What I read linked many times (really many) with the knowledge I've been acquiring during the course. And this is not only refreshing, by transmitting a sense of continuity, but also motivating, by confirming my learning, seeing things as a complete undivided whole.*

*30 - It is fundamental to reflect and investigate, since by doing so we become aware of our dilemmas as well of those in society. To consider both leads us to choose which is the best way to follow, learn and acquire different values. To accept others, to respect them, understand, love and to cherish them is important, so that we feel as generous people, gentle and fundamentally happy with ourselves. Besides leading me to reflection, the classes of Professional Deontology made me feel very happy since I concluded that with the root values and principles I have I'll be a good citizen and teacher.*

d) Acquiring work methods to be used with future students' (mainly educating values and citizenship). Some examples:

*3 - (...) I think that the knowledge I have acquired will help me in my profession (...).*

*6 - [The discussed themes] are up-to-date and pertinent that in [a way] will always be present in my professional path.*

*15 - More than learning concepts and debating them, I realized that it is not that hard to apply, in a practical manner in the classroom, activities that lead children to self-reflection and to reflect on the world around them.*

e) To amplify the understanding of the sense of education and of the educative act, as well as their specific knowledge, norms and values. Some examples:

*10 - Performing some small tasks along the semester, as well as analysing several texts (...), helped improving my reflection ability, also contributing for the creation of new ideas and values, which are able to respond to the needs and demands of my future profession.*

*23 - The classes of Professional Deontology were of the utmost importance for me in this last year of the course it is very important to think Education, its founding principles, the laws regulating it and about what is to be a teacher.*

25 - *It is always a pleasure to learn and discuss issues related to the teaching profession, as we become more secure professionals and conscious of our work.*

f) The broadening of the concept of being a teacher, and of its ethical and axiological dimension, as well as its nature of personal commitment for the transforming people and society. Some examples:

2 - (...) *we should have curricular units like this throughout our training, for teachers do not just teach what they know, but also what they are and being a teacher is not a finished processed, but a "constant to become"...*

29 - *In my opinion, to be a teacher is something to be taken seriously with a very high degree of responsibility, since the future of many children depends on the way we teach and educate. So these children begin their social, personal and professional life with the benefit that all of us – it's not enough if I do it alone - future educators do it seriously.*

31 - *A teacher is an educator and a mentor; however influenced by a whole set of external and internal factors delimitating his/her practice. Therefore, the teacher must be prepared to respond to the needs and demands of the educational community, as well as to adapt the teaching practice to the educational reality in which he/she is inserted. In short, to be a teacher is to promote the development of tomorrow's citizens, preparing them to face the reality of life and society.*

g) A greater awareness of the importance of education for intervening in a contemporary multicultural society and preparing citizens for that same society. Some examples:

14 - *Along this semester, I've been constructing even more elaborated concepts of "what is to be a teacher" and "why being a teacher". Through this knowledge construction, I learned that, really, a single person can change (...) and develop many mentalities or, at least, make them reflect a little more upon matters than we often leave on the back burner (...).*

21 - *Today I understand how necessary it was to think about myself, the problems of the world, human rights or citizenship, in order to grow, to evolve as a person and as a future educator, to understand the different identities and to be prepared to live with multiculturalism in the classroom. To teach children values or just to educate young people to be well prepared for the future.*

h) A more critical vision of education, of the axiological dimension of pedagogy and of the narrow linking of education to values. Some examples:

19 - (...) *the curricular unit of Professional Deontology is of the utmost importance for teacher training since it plays a relevant role in their personal and social development by showing the importance and need of value education, thus placing teachers in the urge to follow some ethical conduct.*

24 - (...) *[the acquired knowledge] allowed me to conclude that a teacher ought to work ethically and deontologically throughout his professional career.*

i) The role of the teacher in the development of its future students, recognising that to educate is to communicate as a person. Some examples:

32 - *I am very pleased for having attended this curricular unit since the discussed themes are important to understand the world of the teacher, as a human being and a professional.*

33 - *During the time I attended these classes I thought a lot about my path as a higher and non-higher education student, evaluating my path as a trainee of a pre-service teacher training course. I recognise that it is important that there is a personal and social education, within the Educational System, in what concerns the teachers (...).*

34 - *The importance of this curricular unit is closely related to the pertinent awareness it implements in future teachers, of their projects as persons, citizens and professionals; as well as in the clarification of concepts as complex as citizenship, democracy, duties, rights and human rights. These are, undoubtedly, vital points for the development of competences of interpersonal relationships.*

j) The continuous development process of the teacher's personality and his/her professionalism. Some examples:

9 - *To ensure the future of a Primary School Teacher, it is necessary to go through several paths to help us understanding the true reason behind the existence of our profession and what its duties are. It is through the curricular unit of professional deontology (...) that such objectives are attained.*

27 - *Professional Deontology is seen as a perennial path of a development process. The objective of the teacher is to bend the old theory that reduces Pedagogy to a mere art and not perceived as a science [...] Pedagogy and Deontology are intimately related, because they prepare the individual to a society with equality values. Nevertheless the real preparation consists of a scientific and investigative practice, [and] only with a continuous training of a deontological nature, such as ethics, moral, civism, will the teacher overcome every obstacle.*

k) Recognising the responsibility and the social and "citizenship" role of the teacher, not only taking care of the cognitive development of his/her students, but also of their ethical and moral construction. Some examples:

17 - *I think certain curricular units, since they have a direct impact on what it is to be a teacher, should be taught along with our whole training. I'm referring specifically to Professional Deontology, whose main objective is to deal with the rights and duties of the teaching profession, drawing attention to its importance in society. As a matter of fact, being a teacher is not a profession that only deals with the cognitive development of children. It's a profession that has the responsibility of dealing with human beings [while] growing up, not being able to forget that these little beings are the young people of tomorrow and that the world awaits them.*

36 - (...) *professional deontology (...) is closely connected to ethics and morals because the teaching profession encompasses all these issues due to the centering in the personal, cognitive and social education of the pupils.*

## 5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The teaching experience reported and evaluated in the preceding pages was carried throughout the subsequent academic years, allowing a strong consolidation of the results



we demonstrated herein. We hope to have the opportunity of including the new data in a subsequent article following this. Nevertheless, some conclusions are already possible at this stage, having in mind that they are reinforced by new data.

Therefore, in this discussion we point out firstly that the population whom we worked with in this experience is small and its value in terms of statistical significance is practically null. That is not, altogether, the objective of this article. Its goal is merely to demonstrate a pedagogical experience and to analyse qualitatively the material obtained through the evaluation performed by the participants of its training effects as perceived by them. If we envisage it under this qualitative perspective, and if we focus our attention on the students' discourse, we find that it supplies an ample scope to explore the attribution of meaning by the learners to their experience and praxis. Besides, that meaning is decisive for undergoing other experiences of the same kind, allowing the verification of how it worked and which personal intervention abilities it was found to have.

Another aspect not considered directly in this article is the role of the lecturer charged of the training. It is implied in the students' discourse and corresponds to what is aimed at by the curricular unit of *Professional Deontology*, that is to say, the need of taking into account explicitly in the teaching profession its particularly relevant ethical demands, taking into account a conception of ethics under the sign of intersubjectivity (Levinas, 1965; 1974; Ramos, 2007). This analysis would require another perspective of performing this training, involving the presence of other teachers charged of the curricular unit, but this was not possible to do then, when this pedagogical experience has taken place.

As a pedagogical experience, evaluated by the learners that have participated in a self-reflective and narrative way, it has succeeded as demonstrated by the collected and analysed testimonials.

In a summary of the analysis previously made, we found the acknowledging of personal change at important levels for the acquisition of knowledge and competences, as well as a structuring of the notion of teaching from the fundamental idea of its intrinsically ethical and intersubjective nature.

Therefore, it seems to us that this experience allows the extraction/consolidation of a fundamental idea which gives Education a critical practical sense [if we take the word "praxis" in Aristotle's sense, thus giving education the status of a moral science (Aristotle, 2004)]. Through the development of the Programme of *Professional Deontology* and the results obtained and previously presented, the need to emphasize the importance of the personality of the teacher and his/her personal and ethical development has become clearer to us. Since this development is an infinite process, it has to be combined with professional development, whose desideratum may be attained by the introduction of a critical Deontology. Within this framework, non-formal education approach processes are to be implemented and promoted since they are more geared towards an intervention on the personal and social competences of the trainees.

This is also a way of giving Education, through its professionals, the ability to develop a critical reflective practice, enabling it to produce the necessary changes of reality, without which it loses its fundamental sense. As a matter of fact, if Education



was to be seen merely as a means of adapting people to the existing reality, we would only allow ourselves to be the prey of the reductive dominant neoliberal and technocratic ideology. We would be totally unable of being aware of its dominance and of saying the word to overcome it and to liberate people (Freire, 1974). To this process, an intersubjective founding of Education provides the necessary philosophical basis (Freire, 1974).

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## Annexes:

**Table 1**

<b>Category 1. Personal Change</b>
<b>Subcategory 1. 1. Self-knowledge in terms of process</b>
<b>Log Units</b>
1 – The portfolio I had to elaborate allowed me a better self-knowledge. (...) it appealed to my creative side and to the reflection on the self.
2 – The debates performed during the classes (...) allowed me to acquire more communication skills.
3 - (...) the contribution [of the portfolio] to a deeper knowledge of the Self and to a greater awareness of my role as a future teacher.
4 - I've reached a certain ease when it comes to speaking in public, exposing my ideas with no fear and standing with conviction for my opinions.
5 - Every day I climbed one step of these stairs, each one representing a new step of my path in Professional Deontology. And when I reach the top, what shall I do? Shall I stop? No! I will go on...

6 - It contributed to the development of my critical faculties and of my capacity for reflection about questions which I had never seriously considered.

7 - It also allowed me to become conscious of the importance of a civic and moral education.

8 - (...) it helped me to develop my creativity, through a scarcely common practice in higher education, which is to leave to the students' the choice of the investigation's theme, allowing us to express our creativity and concerns.

9 - Professional Deontology provided me with very important moments of debating ideas, which showed me different ways of thinking and feeling, these moments were, for me, very constructive in making me reviewing my position towards some matters many times.

10 - My path in professional deontology was undoubtedly a path that allowed me to evolve since the first class, thus contributing to improving my attitude and my knowledge in what concerns this curricular unit in a positive way.

11 - (...) all of us had a very active role in this class and every theme was extremely meaningful for me, as a person and as future teacher.

12 - It was a curricular unit that enriched me a lot on a personal and professional level (...).

13 - I consider my path in Professional Deontology a very positive one. I think I evolved as a person and future education professional.

14 - I consider these curricular units [Personal and Social Development and Professional Deontology] important for our training, since they make us reflect upon things that we don't even recall most of the time.

15 - (...) for me the Portfolio was one of the hardest tasks I had to perform for this curricular unit. Despite (...) having already gathered three portfolios, this was the one in which I had greater difficulty. This is due to the fact that the themes lacked the need of reflecting on ourselves, since it is easier for me to talk about the others, than about myself. This is because when we reflect about us, there's a need to ask ourselves: Who are we after all? Sometimes it becomes very complicated to find answers to that question, which we rarely answer, only when we are forced to do so. Despite having found huge difficulties, I think this portfolio was very pertinent and fruitful, not only for us as a persons and citizens, but mainly for us as future teachers.

16 - In this task [the portfolio] I am "forced" to reflect upon myself, what I was, what I am and what I want to be. Although in the beginning it seemed like an easy thing to do, now I'm able to say that it isn't. This was the hardest portfolio I had to make, for I had to reflect a lot and now that I have finished, it seems that I didn't say all there was to say (...).

17 - (...) a basic school teacher came into the classroom to share her experience and perspective with us, and that in a certain way conveyed some support and incentive which I didn't expect.

18 - The debates conducted during the classes (...) allowed me to develop my critical faculties.

19 - I got to know the importance of concepts such as citizenship, democracy, duties, rights, (human rights).

20 - I liked the curricular unit as it contributed significantly to my academic and personal education. I have acquired relevant knowledge on society and on the systems around the school that influence the teaching practice, and on the importance of the required permanent knowledge updating to respond to the demands of society.

21 - I have adopted a cooperative attitude towards my colleagues.

22 - I came (...) to master some competences of personal relationship within different contexts.

Table 2

<b>Category 2. Meaning revelation (personal and professional)</b>	
<b>Log Units</b>	
1	Curricular units such these stir up the personal development of the pupils and induce their full education in its multiple dimensions.
2	(...) we should have curricular units like this throughout our training, for teachers do not just teach what they know, but also what they are and being a teacher is not a finished processed, but a “constant to become”...
3	(...) I think that the knowledge I have acquired will help me in my profession (...).
4	(...) the curricular unit of “Professional Deontology” proved to be very important when contributing to the solid construction of my path as a future teacher.
5	On the first day of the classes, the professor suggested we thought about what is to be a teacher, which is nothing we hadn’t done before, but never in a structured way. In the beginning I thought it would be easy, but it wasn’t that simple. I thought until I found the “key” to write a small text (...). The solution was to open my heart and write what I think is being a real teacher. This exercise proved to be very productive for it “compelled” me to structure my ideas about the profession I intend to follow.
6	[The discussed themes] are up-to-date and pertinent that in [a way] will always be present in my professional path.
7	(...) I consider that my path in Professional Deontology was sufficient for my training, at a professional, personal and social level.
8	I personally liked the curricular unit and considered it important for my training.
9	To ensure the future of a Basic School Teacher, it is necessary to go through several paths to help us understanding the true reason behind the existence of our profession and what its duties are. It is through the curricular unit of professional deontology (...) that such objectives are attained.
10	Performing some small tasks along the semester, as well as analysing several texts (...), helped improving my reflection ability, also contributing for the creation of new ideas and values, which are able to respond to the needs and demands of my future profession.
11	[The curricular unit was] very productive from the point of view of the personal and social development and professional ethics.
12	Soon I realised that the themes discussed in the class had an added value both for [me as] teacher and for [me as] person.
13	This curricular unit also had - and mainly - an awareness-raising nature for situations I’ll be able to face as a Basic School Teacher.
14	Along this semester, I’ve been constructing even more elaborated concepts of “what is to be a teacher” and “why being a teacher”. Through this knowledge construction, I learned that, really, a single person can change (...) and develop many mentalities or, at least, make them reflect a little more upon matters than we often leave on the back burner (...).
15	More than learning concepts and debating them, I realized that it is not that hard to apply, in a practical manner in the classroom, activities that lead children to self-reflection and to reflect on the world around them.
16	I enjoyed the readings on Philosophy of Education (...). What I read linked many times (really many) with the knowledge I’ve been acquiring during the course. And this is not only refreshing, by transmitting a sense of continuity, but also motivating, by confirming my learning, seeing things as a complete undivided whole.



17 - I think certain curricular units, since they have a direct impact on what it is to be a teacher, should be taught along with our whole training. I'm referring specifically to Professional Deontology whose main objective is to deal with the Rights and Duties of the teaching profession, drawing attention to its importance in society. As a matter of fact, being a teacher is not a profession that only deals with the cognitive development of children. It's a profession that has the responsibility of dealing with human beings [while] growing up, not being able to forget that these little beings are the young people of tomorrow and that the world awaits them.

18 - (...) a free space [the class] to express our opinion, giving us enough freedom to share daily situations (...) both at a personal and at a practical pedagogical level.

19 - (...) the curricular unit of Professional Deontology is of the utmost importance for teacher training since it plays a relevant role in their personal and social development by showing the importance and need of value education, thus placing teachers in the urge to follow some ethical conduct.

20 - Every issue dealt with in the curricular unit points to the idea that the teaching profession holds an ethical commitment. In this sense, I think that it is extremely important that teachers think about these ethical issues from their pre-service training, and that they study the existing problems at school and at the educational community, and successfully take action in order to be recognised as good professionals.

21 - Today I understand how necessary it was to think about myself, the problems of the world, human rights or citizenship, in order to grow, to evolve as a person and as a future educator, to understand the different identities and to be prepared to live with multiculturalism in the classroom. To teach children values or just to educate young people to be well prepared for the future.

22 - The fact that classes were taught to create critical and reflective faculties in the students allowed me to start seeing the teaching experience with a more critical eye.

23 - The classes of Professional Deontology were of the utmost importance for me in this last year of the course it is very important to think Education, its founding principles, the laws regulating it and about what is to be a teacher.

24 - (...) [the acquired knowledge] allowed me to conclude that a teacher ought to work ethically and deontologically throughout his professional career.

25 - It is always a pleasure to learn and discuss issues related to the teaching profession, as we become more secure professionals and conscious of our work.

26 - (...) my path in the curricular unit was very interesting, both from the personal and the professional point of view, since I learned more about the profession I intend to pursue in the future.

27 - Professional Deontology is seen as a perennial path of a development process. The objective of the teacher is to bend the old theory that reduces Pedagogy to a mere art and not perceived as a science [...] Pedagogy and Deontology are intimately related, because they prepare the individual to a society with equality values. Nevertheless the real preparation consists of a scientific and investigative practice, [and] only with a continuous training of a Deontological nature, such as ethics, moral, civism, will the teacher overcome every obstacle.

28 - One of the issues that are still forgotten is value education, which, to my understanding, can never be neglected or forgotten by School and by Teachers, whether they are working or not. But in reality there are some teachers that fight for it, while others hide themselves under the teaching "shell", forgetting that teaching is a profession of an unquestionable ethical sort: to be a teacher is to educate.

29 - In my opinion, to be a teacher is something to be taken seriously with a very high degree of responsibility, since the future of many children depends on the way we teach and educate. So these children begin their social, personal and professional life with the benefit that all of us – it's not enough if I do it alone - future educators do it seriously.



30 – It is fundamental to reflect and investigate, since by doing so we become aware of our dilemmas as well of those in society. To consider both leads us to choose which is the best way to follow, learn and acquire different values. To accept others, to respect them, understand, love and to cherish them is important, so that we feel as generous people, gentle and fundamentally happy with ourselves. Besides leading me to reflection, the classes of Professional Deontology made me feel very happy since I concluded that with the root values and principles I have I'll be a good citizen and teacher.

31 - A teacher is an educator and a mentor, however influenced by a whole set of external and internal factors delimitating his/her practice. Therefore, the teacher must be prepared to respond to the needs and demands of the educational community, as well as to adapt the teaching practice to the educational reality in which he/she is inserted. In short, to be a teacher is to promote the development of tomorrow's citizens, preparing them to face the reality of life and society.

32 - I am very pleased for having attended this curricular unit since the discussed themes are important to understand the world of the teacher, as a human being and a professional.

33 - During the time I attended these classes I thought a lot about my path as a higher and non-higher education student, evaluating my path as a trainee of a pre-service teacher training course. I recognise that it is important that there is a personal and social education, within the Educational System, in what concerns the teachers (...).

34 - The importance of this curricular unit is closely related to the pertinent awareness it implements in future teachers, of their projects as Persons, Citizens and Professionals; as well as in the clarification of concepts as complex as citizenship, democracy, duties, rights and human rights. These are, undoubtedly, vital points for the development of competences of interpersonal relationships.

35 - The path in professional Deontology was prolific in the creation of new knowledge on the teaching profession, as well as on fundamental aspects related to the teaching practice.

36 - (...) professional deontology (...) is closely connected to ethics and morals because the teaching profession encompasses all these issues due to the centering in the personal, cognitive and social education of the pupils.

37 - (...) a very important curricular unit in the sense that it turned me into a more conscious and sensitive citizen towards crucial themes, such as Ethics and Deontology.

38 - The themes that were covered, the debates and the tasks lead us to think carefully about society and even about ourselves. (...) Now I see reality in a different view and am much more aware of social problems.

39 - Making a final assessment of my path in Professional Deontology, it was very fruitful and productive, drawing my attention to certain situations I wasn't aware of, or even making me see them in a different perspective.

40 - I have to say that the creation of this portfolio forced me to think about numerous aspects which I had not been aware of all this time throughout my education.